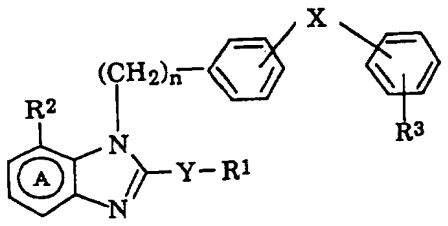
What is claimed is:

1. A method for the prophylaxis or treatment of

glomerulonephritis in a mammal comprising the step of administering to a mammal in need thereof a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound or salt thereof represented by formula (I)



(I)

wherein R^1 stands for H or an optionally substituted hydrocarbon residue; R^2 stands for an optionally esterified carboxyl group; R^3 stands for a group capable of forming an anion; X shows that the phenylene and phenyl groups bond to each other directly or through a spacer having an atomic chain length of two or less; n stands for 1 or 2; ring A stands for a benzene ring having 1 or 2 optional substituents in addition to R^2; Y stands for a bond, -O-, $-S(O)_m-$ wherein m stands for 0, 1 or 2, or $-N(R^4)-$ wherein R^4 stands for H or an optionally substituted alkyl group.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein R^1 stands for a lower alkyl or lower cycloalkyl group which may be substituted.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein R^1 stands for ethyl.

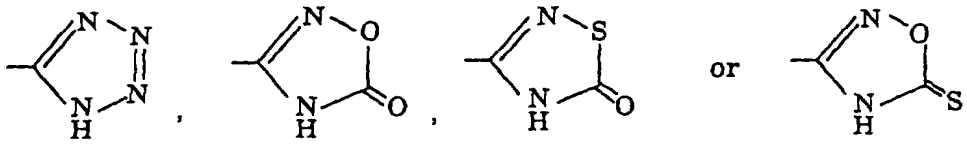
4. The method of claim 1 wherein R^1 stands for ethyl and Y stands for -O-.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein R^2 stands for a group represented by the formula -CO-D" wherein D" stands for hydroxyl, or lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy whose alkyl moiety is optionally substituted with hydroxyl, amino, halogen, lower (C_{2-6}) alkanoyloxy, lower (C_{4-7}) cycloalkanoyloxy, lower (C_{1-6}) alkoxycarbonyloxy, lower (C_{3-7}) cycloalkoxycarbonyloxy or lower (C_{1-4}) alkoxy.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein R^2 stands for a lower alkoxycarbonyl group substituted with cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein R^3 is an optionally substituted 5-7 membered monocyclic heterocyclic residue having a hydrogen atom capable of leaving as a proton.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein R^3 stands for one of the following:



9. The method of claim 8 wherein R^3 stands for tetrazolyl.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein R^2 stands for a lower alkoxycarbonyl group substituted with a cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy group and R^3 stands for a tetrazolyl group.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein R^1 stands for a lower alkyl group; Y stands for -O-; R^2 stands for a lower alkoxycarbonyl group substituted with a cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy group; and R^3 stands for a tetrazolyl group.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said compound represented by formula (I) is (±)-1-(cyclohexyloxycarbonyloxy)ethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]-1H-benzimidazole-7-carboxylate.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said compound represented by formula (I) is 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]-1H-benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein said compound represented by formula (I) is pivaloyloxymethyl 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(1H-tetrazol-5-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]-1H-benzimidazole-7-carboxylate.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein said compound represented by formula (I) is 2-ethoxy-1-[[2'-(4,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1,2,4-oxadiazol-3-yl)biphenyl-4-yl]methyl]-1H-benzimidazole-7-carboxylic acid.

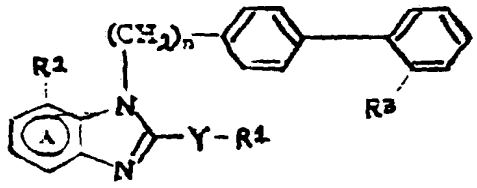
16. The method of claim 1, wherein R^2 stands for a carboxyl group.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein R^3 stands for 4,5- dihydro-5-oxo-1, 2, 4-oxadiazol-3-yl.

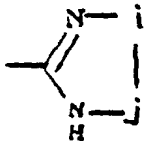
18. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is a method of treatment.

19. A method for the prophylaxis or treatment of

glomerulonephritis in a mammal comprising the step of administering to a mammal in need thereof a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound or salt thereof represented by formula :



wherein R^1 stands for H or a lower (C_1-C_4) alkyl; R^2 stands for a group represented by the formula –CO-D" where D" stands for hydroxy or a lower (C_1-C_4) alkoxy group, the alkyl moiety of which optionally is substituted with hydroxy, amino, halogen, lower (C_2-C_6) alkanoyloxy, lower (C_4-C_7) cycloalkanoyloxy, lower (C_1-C_6) alkoxycarbonyloxy, lower (C_3-C_7) cycloalkoxycarbonyloxy or lower (C_1-C_4) alkoxy; R^3 stands for a tetrazolyl, carboxyl group or a group represented by the formula



where i stands for -O- or –S- and j stands for >C=O, >C=S or $>S(O)_m$ is 0, 1 or 2; n stands for 1 or 2; ring A stands for a benzene ring; Y stands for O, N(H) or S.